



Staff Report

STATUS REPORT ON THE ACQUISITION OF AN INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE SYSTEM

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

As a result of the recommendation from the Technology Committee and approval by the City Council, the acquisition of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system was placed on the Technology Committee Project Priorities list on December 1, 2004. As per the project rankings on that list and funding availability, the IVR system is now eligible for purchase. Staff has issued 12 Requests for Proposals and received two responses from viable vendors, Selectron Technologies Inc. and Tele-Works, Inc. These two vendors made presentations to interested members of the Technology Committee as well as the involved departments on 7/15/2005 and 7/27/2005, and a decision was made to select Tele-Works as the IVR supplier. This memo serves to advise the City Council on the status of this acquisition.

Background

In an effort to provide better service to the public, staff has identified the need to improve the current telephone system. The high volume of Development Services calls received daily at the Permit Center for Building, Planning and Public Works inspections frequently overwhelms staff and results in the transfer of the caller to voice mail. This has caused frustration and delays for City clients. The IVR system would provide an interactive computer response to the caller for a variety of inspection requests and information on the status of a development project. The option of speaking directly with a staff member will always be available. In addition, an IVR system has the potential for handling many other telephone functions involving other City departments, however, initially it will be tested by the Permit Center.

Discussion

Tele-Works, Inc. has included three discreet products in their package of services:

- ***Tele-Works Voice Response (TVR) Web Applications***
- ***Automated Citizen Information System (ACIS/311)***
- ***First Responder***

Tele-Works Voice Response (TVR) is the base product that will schedule inspections and allow clients to access information about inspection results and the status of their projects relative to Planning and Building Divisions, and the Public Works Department's activity. It integrates the City's phone systems with information found on our web site and information stored on City PC's. The TVR software reads the information located on our web site or City PC and using a technology known as "intelligent text parsing", delivers the data through naturally recorded voice or text-to-speech. In this way, a caller may schedule an inspection or obtain information on building or planning applications through our existing "Trak-it" software by CRW. In addition, the system has the capability of delivering the information to hearing-impaired clients.

Automated Citizen Information System (ACIS/311) is a module that allows citizen access to general information or to respond to current issues, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The module organizes City programs and services in an information index, similar to the "frequently asked questions" section found on the City's website. Fashioned after the 911 or 411 numbering approach, 311 is a call center that allows citizens to report non-emergency conditions, receive topical information or respond to a survey. Access to this module is through any communication device (phone, web/email, TDD/TTY, fax, PDA). 311 has a mechanism to contact and update the citizen on the status of their request or concern.

First Responder is a communication tool capable of sending coordinated audio information to telephones, cellular phones, email, email pagers, TDD/TTY, fax machines, and visual information to web sites and personal digital assistants (PDA). This module contains two components, *SelectAlert* and *Web Broadcast*.

SelectAlert is a personal alert and subscription manager for citizens, business owners and clients of the City. Subscribers can select if they would like notification from the City and how they would want that notice delivered. *SelectAlert* organizes these preferences automatically and the City determines the content and timing of the delivery.

The *Web Broadcast* feature is a subscription service that can publish information and news notices to the City's website and send out to customers RSS-based desktop alerts. It can be used for community outreach, emergency alerts, delinquent account notification or public polling.

Fiscal Impact

Per the Project Priorities plan, the IVR acquisition has a budget of seventy-five thousand (\$75,000.00), dollars. Through staff negotiation, the Tele-works' proposal as enumerated was set at a final price of seventy-three thousand, nine hundred and twenty seven (\$73,927.00), dollars, which includes the sales tax. Currently there are sufficient funds in account 620-4142-2142-9040 to fund this project.

Public Contact

The Technology Committee has met on three occasions regarding this matter: initially to discuss the Request for Proposals, for the timing and attendance of the presentations, and for the decision on the vendor. This item is part of the public posting of the City Council agenda.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Council direct staff to move forward with the acquisition of the IVR system and related features from Tele-Works, Inc.

Alternatives

1. Postpone decision pending further deliberation.
2. Take no action.
3. Other option(s) as determined by Council

Attachments

- A. Scope of Work of Tele-Works, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Nolfi
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